celebrated architects, who were prejudiced in favour of Roman and Revival architecture. And again, these latter styles are in the present age frequently regarded as barbarous confusions of incongruous principles and mere travesties of true classic architecture. The universal consent of mankind cannot be the criterion of architectural taste—because that consent has not in any instance been bestowed.

All arts derive from nature their power of giving pleasure. They "hold the mirror up to Nature," and are but the reflex of natural objects or natural emotions. Painting represents natural objects by colour, and Sculpture by form. Poetry, the most comprehensive of all arts, represents by words every passion or other mental image of natural origin.—it is the language of nature. Not, indeed, that art consists in copying or imitating nature, for then the most patient and servile artist would be the best; a daguerreotype would be a higher work of art than the Cartoons of Raphael, and a wax-work exhibition than a sculpture gallery. Nature is not always best represented by an accurate resemblance of her minutest forms. A portrait so exactly resembling a human head, hung against a wall, as to be mistaken for it, would be a painful and appalling object. One of the noblest of the arts—Music—though dependent on nature for its effects, resembles it only in a very remote degree. The highest kinds of artificial music bear no apparent or direct resemblance to natural sounds: but they are regulated by the same fundamental laws: and the man hath no music in his soul who does not feel delight in the singing of nightingales, the rippling sound of brooks, the whispers of summer winds, the murmurs of the distant sea, the roaring of a cataract, the crashing of an avalanche, or the thunders of a great storm.

From analogy, we may suppose that the beauty of architecture also depends on natural causes. Admiration of the appearance of the works of nature is a universal feeling of the human mind: and whether this admiration spring from some innate principle, or be induced by the habit of contemplating nature, the result is the same—that while men retain their love of the beauties of nature, their taste must be prejudiced against those artificial objects in which the elements of natural beauty do not exist.

Architecture is allied to nature, moreover, by a relation which distinguishes it from all the other arts, and constitutes, as we have said, its supremacy over them—its economical application. For as nature preserves throughout her works a definite and useful purpose to which all adornment is subordinate, so is it with true architecture. The wonderful provisions of nature affect our minds—her forms our senses only. The economy of her works is a soul of which her material appearance is but the animated body. Did any part of creation display forms without purpose, it would be no more than an inert adjunct of that body—a dead limb. So likewise in architecture; its utility is its life and soul, and the useless members are lifeless and soulless also.

These analogies between nature and art possess far higher interest than that of mere abstract speculations. They are of direct practical value, for they furnish the key to the only certain and infallible system of architectural criticism. On them alone must the canons of that criticism be founded; and whatever can be proved contrary to them, whatever can be shewn to "o'erstep the modesty of nature," must be condemned as the result of artificial or false taste. We use the phrases artificial taste and false taste as synonymous, because for our purpose they are so. The pleasures of taste affect our minds, not by a logical process, but by sensation, passion, or emotion, or whatever else designates the *spontaneous* feelings. We have no more power to *create* tastes than we have to create in our minds additional faculties of sensation besides those bestowed by nature. Artificial taste, therefore, the craving after objects for which there is no natural relish, can only result from the perversions of custom. It is a morbid appetite, a depravation of the natural faculties, the sickliness and deformity of a mind crippled by the swaddling-clothes of society. True tastes are not produced like the pearls in oysters—from disease. C.

ARCHITECTURAL TOPICS.*

LET us trust that the day is not very remote when professorships of architecture will be founded in our universities, that the alumni who reside in those ancient seats of learning, so rich in the treasures of architecture, aye, richer than most cities, may learn to feel and to appreciate the glories which surround them; and that, whilst they study the poetry and the history of the Greeks and Romans, they may also make some acquaintance with the other treasures which they have bequeathed to us.

Why should not our rising youth, scions of the first families in the kingdom, whose future rank in life may place them in the enviable position of a Mecænas, or an Agrippa, towards the arts, be allowed to cultivate some knowledge of the works of an Ictinus, a Phidias, an Apollodorus, as well as of Homer and Euripides, of Virgil and Horace, of Cicero and Pliny?

It is strange that such appointments should yet have to be made in places where illustration would be so rife, the instruction so concentrated, the hearers so well prepared, and the advantages so great, and more particularly in the last respect, to that large proportion of students whose destination is to pour forth the highest order of instruction in those sublime temples which the skill, the genius, and the taste of our ancestors have reared to the worship of the Almighty, and of which they are to be the guardians, whose duty it will he to prevent any unworthy hand from profaning the sacred character of the place by tasteless and unmeaning changes.

We are led to believe that a new style or order of architecture is in contemplation or desiderated. When we have exhausted the means already in our power, it will be time to require others. It appears to me to be a great mistake to suppose that the orders left to us by the Greeks and Romans, are not sufficient for every purpose of use in architecture; take the works of Sir Christopher Wren, by way of example, who was only acquainted with, or at least only imitated, Roman art. Do his churches at all remind us of Pagan temples? does his St. Paul's bear any resemblance to a temple of Jupiter, of Mars, or of Apollo? he takes the column and its entablature, it is true, from one of these buildings, but how admirably and with what freshness of thought does he apply them to the protestant structure; nor does he find it necessary to repeat himself, in his fifty churches in London; how great, how charming, the variety, how instructive are the lessons they afford. He invented no new order, but the manner in which he disposed of the ancient materials may rank as an invention, just as Shakspeare, though founding his immortal dramas on some plot or story ready-fashioned to his hands, is yet entitled to the palm of originality, from the glowing diction and matchless imagery with which he invests his subjects.

We hear, too, something said about the want of a national style, as if the whole length and breadth of the land did not teem with specimens of a national style, one of whose peculiarities is even termed the Early English,† as if to place for ever beyond the reach of doubt its derivation from the soil; and so abundant is this field of exercise, that of the hundreds of churches bequeathed to us, no two are to be found as copies of each other; each resembles each, as man resembles man, but we shall not find an Antipholus or a Dromio among them.

I suspect it will generally be found that persons who exclaim against the poverty or insufficiency of the ancient orders of architecture, and disdain to be trammelled with their rules, produce, in the conceit of being wiser and better than their fellows, and under the plea of novelty, the most monstrous caricatures of architecture, in which, however, we can perceive little that deserves the name of originality, for these productions are always based in some respects upon the models of the antique, seen dimly through the disguise attempted to be passed off for invention. The truth is, that such persons are not inventors, but, to avoid the imputation of copying that which is good, in which they would easily be detected, they select some specimens, little known, of an inferior kind, and therefore not so easily recognized, and palm them off as inventions.

I do not imagine that the shade of the Royal Academy Professor of Architecture remained undisturbed in his last repose whilst one of his recent and unfinished works was receiving at the hands of a living and distinguished architect an elaboration of ornament which has completely changed its character. At this point I may remark that the taste of the day evinces too much inclination to sacrifice broad effect and strongly-defined outline, for minute ornament and crowded detail. In a climate like ours, these last can rarely be preserved long from becoming obscured, and their freshness marred; and thus the elaborateness which looks well upon paper, is [illegible] more, when executed, than a mass of undistinguishable confusion.

Here, again, we may turn, with great profit to ourselves, to the examples of our great masters in the art, Sir Christopher Wren and Inigo Jones, whose ornament was never obtrusive, never redundant, and always in just subjection to the general design. I trust that our rulers may not take up a notion that Whitehall Chapel is too plain and unadorned, or that it requires to be overlaid with a profuse display of festoons, garlands, and vases.

Another feature of the day in our street architecture is the losing sight of the individuality of the houses, several of which are pressed, as it were, into the service of one design. The absurdity of this practice is sometimes very glaring—as when one house has its fair complement of columns, whilst another must be content for its share with at most half a pilaster. This method, objectionable enough in our shops and private dwelling-houses, is, *mirabile dictu!* extended to our palaces; and the new front of the metropolitan abode of Royalty has more the appearance of five houses clubbed together for the nonce, than the principal entrance to the palace of the greatest queen in the world.

Exactly a twelvemonth ago* I lifted up a warning voice against the impolicy of lavishing a vast expenditure upon Buckingham Palace; and though that warning was re-echoed through the land with much public approbation, the golden opportunity has not been seized of rescuing England from the reproach, that she is the only one of European kingdoms which does not possess a palace worthy of its capital and its sovereign. No wonder that our gracious queen prefers to inhale the genial breezes of the Solent rather than the unhealthy damps of Pimlico.

An emergency, of which my pamphlet foretold the probability, is likely to occur sooner than I anticipated, through the munificence of an individual, whose name will be for ever associated to his honour with the fine arts. In suggesting that the National Gallery of paintings might find a fitting abode in the palace when the sovereign should be provided with a more convenient and healthy residence, I little thought that so soon a large space would be required for an increased collection: but the noble promise of Mr. Vernon, to bestow upon this country his unrivalled gallery of English Masters, points to the necessity of having a building fit to receive this accession to the public treasures. A new building, therefore, will be required; and, as to the shrine which is to inclose such precious gems of painting, let us hope that it will be designed in a spirit worthy of the nation—that, as a specimen of architecture, it may stand foremost among the monuments of the metropolis—and that no niggard hand may deal out the means to produce in one spot a concentration of all that is best and most beautiful in an union of the sister arts, architecture, painting, and sculpture, which, like the Three Graces, are ever seen to most advantage when closely united.

Upon the whole, the events of the past are sufficiently encouraging to warrant the hope that the country and the country's rulers are awakened to the belief that her arts may prove her best monuments, to later ages, of her rank among civilised nations; and though when,

* From an address delivered at the anniversary meeting of the Freemasons of the Church, by Mr. G. R. French.

† The terms "Tudor" and "Elizabethan" also sufficiently denote claims to a national origin.

* In a series of letters, first published in THE BUILDER, and collected into a pamphlet, with additions, entitled, "The Palace, the National Gallery, and the Royal Academy considered: by G. R. French, architect. John Weale. 1846."

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